

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-6 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 3, and 4 have been amended herein. Claim 2 has been canceled herein without prejudice. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

**I. OBJECTION TO THE SPECIFICATION**

The abstract stands objected to due to its length. The abstract has been amended not to contain more than 150 words. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

**II. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-7 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 3 and 4 have been amended not to include the term "can be." Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

**III. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-7 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of U.S. Patent No. 4,891,476 ("Nation") and U.S. Patent No. 6,525,284 ("Latwesen"). Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nation, Latwesen, and U.S. Patent No. 5,967,301 ("Reed"). Claims 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of Nation, Latwesen, Reed, and U.S. Patent No. 5,132,499 ("Valenzona"). All pending claims are believed to be allowable over the cited art. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

**Independent Claim 1**

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include all limitations of claim 2. Specifically, claim 1 requires that "the actuation body is formed of the elastomer as well as the cam follower is formed of a plastomer whose elasticity is lower than that of the elastomer." No new matter has been introduced by the amendments.

The Office Action admits that the Nation patent fails to teach the actuation body and cam follower formed of an elastomer or plastomer. The Latwesen patent was cited to cure the deficiencies of the Nation patent. However, the Latwesen patent fails to suggest the specific relationship between the elasticity of the plastomer forming the cam follower, and the elasticity

of the elastomer forming the actuation body. Nor does it suggest that the cam follower is formed of a plastomer whose elasticity is *lower* than that of the elastomer, as claimed. Therefore, independent claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the combination of Nation and Latwesen.

#### Independent Claim 3

The Office Action admits that the Nation and Latwese patents fail to teach the extreme ends ... are formed in an arc shape. The Reed patent was cited to cure the deficiencies of Nation and Latwesen. However, the Reed patent fails to teach the extreme ends of the tooth portions of one of the first and second latchet teeth are formed in an arc shape, as claimed.

The Office Action seems to ignore one of the claimed limitations, i.e., "*the extreme ends of the tooth portions of one of the first and second latchet teeth are formed in an arc shape.*" As illustrated in Fig. 5 of the Reed patent, the cams 64 and 66 both have saw teeth edges at their extreme ends. Therefore, Reed cannot be said to teach the claimed arc-shaped extreme ends. As such, independent claim 3 is believed to be allowable over the cited references.

According to one exemplary embodiment of the invention, such arc-shaped extreme ends can reduce the abutment noise. See, page 7, lines 5-15 of the present specification.

#### Independent Claim 4

Claim 4 has been amended to further clarify one of the features of the invention. Specifically, claim 4 now requires, *inter alia*, that "the cam follower holds one end of the elastic member and is formed of synthetic resin," and that "the contact element switching mechanism is actuated when the actuating member rotates to cause a movable contact element to slide on a stationary contact element." Support for the amendments is found at, for example, page 16, lines 15-24; page 19, lines 17-20; and Figs. 2-4 of the present specification. No new matter has been introduced by the amendments.

According to the Valenzano patent, one end of a metallic auxiliary spring 29 is held by a metallic rivet 47 provided in a cam follower 25 (Valenzano, column 9, lines 32-39). Thus, when the cam follower 25 rotates in response to a pressing operation of an actuation body 31, the end of the metallic auxiliary spring 29 and the metallic rivet 47 scrape against each other, resulting in producing metallic dust. Such metallic dust can cause a short circuit within a switch.

By contrast, according to one specific embodiment of the invention, the cam follower is formed of synthetic resin as claimed. As such, even if a metallic coil spring is used as the elastic

member, only resin dust, not metallic dust, may be produced. Such resin dust may be advantageous to avoid short-circuiting the switch, as opposed to metallic dust which can cause a short circuit.

Nation, Latwesen, Reed, and Valenzona have been reviewed, and found not to teach or suggest the above-identified claimed features. Therefore, current independent claim 4 is believed to be allowable over the cited art.

In view of the foregoing, independent claims 1, 3, and 4 and their dependent claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance at an early date. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 510-663-1100, ext. 245.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Limited Recognition under 37 CFR § 10.9(b)

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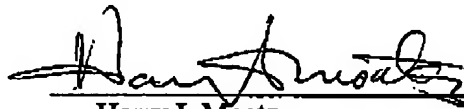
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Expires: January 2, 2007



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